

2020, given the impacts of COVID, was a year of “all of the above” and more. The daily chores and challenges of operating the ranch continued. With livestock needing to be fed, and calved or lambled there was no unemployment. While others struggled to adjust to having their children home doing remote learning, many ranchers just welcomed the extra help from the kids. A major challenge was driving long distances into town for supplies, only to find that many of the needed items were not available.

Livestock markets crashed in the spring of 2020, but returned to a more normal range by the time that most Wyoming ranchers were facing fall marketing. Government policies were stable and somewhat friendly toward agriculture. While some areas of Wyoming experienced drought, most ranchers were able to maintain their herds with some added supplemental feeding. Federal payments through the CARES Act provided significant relief for some. Looking back, two of the three factors could be deemed to have been positive at some time during the year.

While the impacts of COVID have lessened, 2021 is evolving as a much more challenging year for many Wyoming ranchers than 2020 when assessed by the three factors. Drought clearly rises to the top of concerns faced by producers across most of the state. Northwestern Wyoming experienced good winter snowfall and the very southeastern portion has had significant spring moisture. However, the majority of Wyoming is suffering from both a shortage of irrigation water and a lack of soil moisture. As a result, we are seeing a worrisome reduction in the number of summer pasture cattle coming into the state as well as the sale of replacement heifers that had been retained in the fall of 2020. This will have impacts on production for at least the next several years.

The change in administrations in Washington, DC this year has added another high level of uncertainty to Wyoming ranching. While some degree of uncertainty accompanies any political change, the rhetoric and fast-paced issuance of Executive and Secretarial Orders by the current administration has been particularly frightening. The rhetoric that surrounds “30 x 30”, “Make America Beautiful”, “Climate Change” and other initiatives to date lacks any substantive detail to enable our assessment of how it might affect Wyoming’s agriculture industry.

Cattle market events in recent years have given cattle producers both needed wake-up call and a new path forward. Our beef marketing chain clearly has a bottleneck at the processing level. This both increases risk when an event such as COVID impacts a major facility, and concentrates market control in too few hands. Consumer interest in buying local and knowing where their food comes from has provided new marketing opportunities for some producers. In the span of two years Wyoming has gone from having only one federally inspected processing facility to nine facilities either operating or under construction. New larger facilities being developed across the nation, including in Idaho and Nebraska, will provide greater competition and lessen dependence on the “Big Four” U.S. beef processors. Efforts by the industry and the Wyoming Business Council continue to attract larger processors to Wyoming.

A discussion of ranching’s challenges would not be complete without acknowledging the emergence of “fake meat”—both plant-based and lab-cultured products. While these products have received tremendous publicity, endorsement by celebrities and are now offered in some retail establishments, they have not emerged as a threat to the demand for high-quality beef and lamb.

Yes, ranching today is faced with significant emerging challenges. Fortunately,

these challenges are leading to exciting new opportunities. Exploring these opportunities will be the focus of the 2021 Wyoming Cattle Industry Convention and Trade Show, “Positioning Wyoming’s Beef Industry for Success” hosted by the 149 year-old Wyoming Stock Growers Association in Sheridan June 2-4.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME ON JUNE 16, 2021

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 2093. A bill to expand Americans’ access to the ballot box, reduce the influence of big money in politics, strengthen ethics rules for public servants, and implement other anti-corruption measures for the purpose of fortifying our democracy, and for other purposes.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2118. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for increased investment in clean energy, and for other purposes.

PRIVILEGED NOMINATION REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

On request by Senator TED CRUZ, under the authority of S. Res. 116, 112th Congress, the following nomination was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Mohsin Raza Syed, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation, vice Adam J. Sullivan.

On request by Senator TED CRUZ, under the authority of S. Res. 116, 112th Congress, the following nomination was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Victoria Marie Baecher Wassmer, of the District of Columbia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Transportation, vice John E. Kramer.

On request by Senator TED CRUZ, under the authority of S. Res. 116, 112th Congress, the following nomination was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations: Mary Catherine Phee, of Illinois, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation.

On request by Senator TED CRUZ, under the authority of S. Res. 116, 112th Congress, the following nomination was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Mary Catherine Phee, of Illinois, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation, vice Linda Thomas-Greenfield, resigned.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 522. A bill to require each agency, in providing notice of a rule making, to include a link to a 100-word plain language summary of the proposed rule (Rept. No. 117-25).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with amendments:

S. 583. A bill to promote innovative acquisition techniques and procurement strategies, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117-26).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 693. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for the halt in pension payments for Members of Congress sentenced for certain offenses, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117-27).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 2139. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prevent international cybercrime, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. OSSOFF (for himself, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. BENNET, and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 2140. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish the advanced solar manufacturing production credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 2141. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide an additional tool to prevent certain frauds against veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2142. A bill to require annual reports on religious intolerance in Saudi Arabian educational materials, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 2143. A bill to authorize the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to terminate certain contracts on the basis of detrimental conduct to the National Flood Insurance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 2144. A bill to clarify the eligibility for participation of peer support specialists in the furnishing of behavioral health integration services under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. REED:

S. 2145. A bill to ensure that irresponsible corporate executives, rather than shareholders, pay fines and penalties; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 2146. A bill to establish within the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Services a special task force on ensuring Medicare beneficiary access to innovative diabetes technologies and services; to the Committee on Finance.